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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2025/02/03
TAGS: [ECON](#) [EAGR](#) [VE](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#)
SUBJECT: Ascension of Agriculture Minister to Qe Presidency Bodes
Ill for Agriculture

CLASSIFIED BY: Randall Hager, Agricultural Attache, USDA, AGR;
REASON: 1.4(B)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On February 2, 2010, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Elias Jaua Milano, was sworn in as Vice President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (GBRV), a position he received, according to President Chavez, due to his loyalty, honesty, and dedication to the revolution. His selection likely reflects President Chavez' endorsement of Jaua's application of Marxist principles and revolutionary fervor to the agriculture sector, and could suggest Chavez' intention to accelerate socialist economic reforms not only in agriculture but in other sectors as well. Jaua will serve concurrently as Minister of Agriculture. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) According to Jaua's remarks after his February 2 swearing in ceremony, the government must break down the current system of property ownership and continue to control the means of production using Marxist doctrine to return wealth to the people from the "oligarchs who stole it from them." As Minister of Agriculture and Lands, Jaua had already developed a clear track record in this direction; he took a leading role in expropriating land from large farmers and created socialist farming organizations that then received government loans and other inputs.

¶3. (C) During Jaua's tenure as Minister of Agriculture and Lands from 2006 to the present, a post which he will continue to hold, Venezuela has not been successful in reaching the goal of providing full food security to its people. Despite significant funding for agricultural development plans, information from our contacts and our own observation of farms supposedly renovated by the government show that very little good has come from these initiatives. While there may be some isolated successes, by and large production has fallen due to the GBRV's policies, largely initiated by Jaua and supported by President Chavez, who has trusted him to further the revolution. Over the last few years, imports of basic food products have increased at a high cost to the central budget.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Given Jaua's record as Agriculture Minister, Chavez' selection of Jaua as Vice President may suggest his intention to continue and even accelerate the march toward greater government control over strategic sectors of the economy.

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